

INFORMATION LETTER

NATIONAL CANNERS ASSOCIATION

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Army Halts Construction of Radiation Pilot Plant

Deferment of plans for construction of a U. S. Army Ionizing Radiation Center at the Sharpe General Depot, Stockton, Calif., was announced October 22 by the Department of Defense. Planning of the center had been under way since early 1957.

The Center was to develop production techniques for irradiation of foods and to determine the best methods for attaining effective sterilization. It was also intended to produce sufficient quantities of foods for testing of palatability and acceptability.

Active investigation of irradiation as a means of food preservation was begun by the Army in 1953. Much of the laboratory work has been done under research contracts by outside agencies. The N.C.A. Laboratories have held three such contracts, one from the Atomic Energy Commission and two from the Quartermaster Corps, aimed at determining the radiation dosage requirements for significant spoilage organisms, and especially *Clostridium botulinum*, in various foods. By 1957 it was predicted that fundamental problems under laboratory study would be solved by the time the pilot production facility could be completed, and a quick transition from laboratory studies to pilot plant studies would thus be possible.

Army emphasis has been in high dose sterilizing treatment leading to long-term storage of food without refrigeration. Low dose treatment to extend shelf life of perishable foods has been regarded as the principal field of civilian and industrial interest.

Two main reasons were cited in announcing the deferment of plans. One was that certain physiological problems have not yielded to solution in the laboratory. Long-term feeding studies with animals were attended with serious adverse effects, possibly accounted for by destruction of essential nutrients during radiation, but calling for further study. Short-term human feeding tests had not shown ill effects.

A second reason cited was uncertainty over the economic justification

Federal Trade Commission Chairman To Address N.C.A. Convention

Federal Trade Commission Chairman Earl W. Kintner will address the Tuesday, January 19, Marketing Session at the annual convention in Miami Beach on the current enforcement policies of the Commission in the canning industry.

Chairman Kintner will participate in the Marketing Session which has been developed primarily to clarify many of the current, confusing, and often controversial issues with respect to the application of the Robinson-Patman Act to the food industry in general and the canning industry in particular.

New interpretations by the Federal Trade Commission and the courts and other current developments in this field and their implications for canners will be reviewed by H. Thomas Austern, of Covington & Burling, Chief Counsel for the N.C.A., who will share the platform with Chairman Kintner. It is expected that in this joint program there will be valuable illumination, in terms of recent cases and developed Federal Trade Commission emphasis in the enforcement of the Robinson-Patman Act, as to what canners may or may not lawfully do in the areas of pricing, meeting competition, promotional and advertising allowances, and brokerage arrangements. In addition, there will be a full exploration of the impact upon those canners who are presently subject to outstanding cease and desist orders of the Congressional legislation last September making all Robinson-Patman Act orders self-executing and imposing civil penalties of \$5,000 per day for each violation.

of irradiated foods in military feeding, assuming that the process proves feasible. Further studies are needed to fix the place of irradiated foods in strategic and tactical planning when and if they are available. Packaging problems also are not completely solved.

Among private agencies affected by the decision is Irradiated Products, Inc., New York, N. Y., which was formed by four companies—Armour & Company, Food Machinery & Chemical Corp., General Foods Corp., and Continental Can Company—to perform at its own expense production planning for the plant. So far, Irradiated Products, Inc., has spent \$133,000 in assisting the Government in the project.

Facility construction has been under the direction of the Army Corps of

Engineers. So far about \$375,000 has been spent on design drawings, specifications, test boring and other preliminary work. Eventual cost was estimated at \$7.5 million, and thus far about \$1.3 million has been spent on design planning and certain components.

Use of Mexican Farm Labor Said to Peril U. S. Workers

A committee appointed by Secretary of Labor James P. Mitchell to study the program under which about 500,000 Mexicans are brought into the United States yearly to supplement the seasonal farm labor supply has recommended temporary extension of the program provided the Secretary is given greater enforcement powers to

protect the interests of American agricultural workers.

U. S. workers in some instances have been deprived of job opportunities, their working season shortened, and wages and earnings held down by employment of the foreign workers, the committee declared.

The Labor Department summarized the report as follows:

Mexicans are being used increasingly in year-round and skilled occupations contrary to the original intent of the legislation authorizing the program, Public Law 78.

Wage rates in activities employing Mexicans have lagged behind the wage levels for farm work generally. Employers of Mexicans tend to pay less to American farm help than those who use American workers only.

Many employers prefer Mexicans because they represent an assured work force. Thus in some areas almost 100 percent of the seasonal work on certain crop activities is performed by foreign workers.

The committee noted that U. S. workers lack the protections afforded Mexicans who are brought into this country. Under an agreement with the Mexican government, the imported workers are given guaranteed employment and free transportation, housing, and occupational insurance.

The committee made these specific recommendations:

The law should clearly confine the use of Mexicans to necessary crops in temporary labor shortage situations and to unskilled nonmachine jobs.

The Labor Secretary should be authorized to establish wage rates for Mexicans at prevailing levels and at no less than is necessary to avoid an adverse effect on U. S. workers.

He should be authorized to insure active competition among employers for the available supply of U. S. workers by being empowered to refuse to certify employment of Mexicans unless (1) employers have first made "positive and direct recruitment efforts" to obtain U. S. workers, (2) employment conditions offered are equal to those provided by other employers in the area who successfully recruit and retain U. S. workers, (3) U. S. workers are provided benefits equivalent to those given Mexican nationals, and (4) employers of Mexicans offer and pay U. S. workers wages which are not less than those paid to Mexicans.

The Secretary should be empowered to set up standards for judging adverse effects resulting from employing Mexicans.

A tripartite advisory group composed of members from management, labor, and the public should be established to advise the Secretary on the Mexican farm labor program.

Members of the committee appointed by Secretary Mitchell last May are Edward J. Thye, former U. S. Senator from Minnesota; Very Rev. Magr. George G. Higgins, director, Social Action Department, National Catholic Welfare Conference, Washington, D. C.; Glenn E. Garrett, executive director of the Good Neighbor Commission and chairman of the Texas Council on Migrant Labor; and Dr. Rufus B. von Kleinsmid, chancellor of the University of Southern California (see INFORMATION LETTER of June 6, page 203).

The committee said that while shortcomings in Public Law 78 have hampered the Labor Secretary in protecting U. S. workers, the farm labor program has been successful in obtaining unskilled workers to meet labor shortages and in helping to eliminate illegal entry of "wetbacks."

Conservation Reserve Sign-ups

USDA announced October 28 that it has received nearly 103,000 applications to place a total of 9.6 million acres in the Soil Bank Conservation Reserve beginning in 1960—almost twice the national acreage goal.

It will not be possible to accept all of the acreage offered for 1960 contracts, USDA stated. The Department estimated when the sign-up began last summer that approximately 5,100,000 new acres could be taken into the Conservation Reserve with available funds. Present indications are that a somewhat larger acreage than this original goal can be accepted.

Since the acreage of 1960 applications exceeds the new acreage that can be contracted for at this time, the "best buy" priority system previously announced will be used in states and counties to determine which applicants can be offered contracts.

During the 1956-59 period a total of about 246,000 farmers have placed 22.4 million acres in the Reserve. Approximately 14.7 million of this is in whole farm contracts, under which all the cropland on the farm is retired from production.

Supply and Shipments of Certain Canned Fruits

The 1959-60 supply of canned fruits will be about 15 percent greater than a year ago, according to data compiled by the N.C.A. Division of Statistics. The supply of nine major fruit items is compared, in the table below, with the supply a year ago and with season shipments.

For three items—apples, applesauce, and pineapple—the figures represent the supply to October 1. Usually, the supply of apples and applesauce to October 1 represents about one-third of the total year's supply and the sup-

ply of pineapple to October 1 has been about four-fifths of the total annual supply.

Total shipments of the nine major canned fruits for the year 1958-59 amounted to slightly more than 90 million cases. The three-year average 1955-57 is shown also because shipments of some of the fruits, especially apricots, red cherries, and purple plums, were lower than usual during 1958-59 because of relatively short supply.

	Season Shipments		Supply	
	1955-57	1958-59	1958-59	1959-60
	(millions of actual cases)			
Fruits:				
Apples (6/10).....	3.6	3.8	*1.4	*1.4
Applesauce.....	14.2	15.8	*6.2	*7.1
Apricots.....	5.6	2.9	3.1	6.4
Cherries, RHP.....	3.8	2.7	2.9	4.3
Cherries, sweet.....	1.6	1.3	1.8	1.3
Fruit cocktail.....	14.0	15.0	18.3	20.1
Peaches.....	27.7	28.0	33.2	38.9
Pineapple.....	19.6	19.8	*19.7	*18.5
Purple plums (N.W.).....	1.8	1.1	1.3	2.0
Juice:				
Pineapple.....	14.2	12.6	*13.7	*13.1

* Supply to Oct. 1; for other items the supply is the total season supply.

Spinach Pack and Stocks

The 1959 pack of spring-crop spinach totaled 5,538,994 actual cases, according to a report by the N.C.A. Division of Statistics. This is the Division's first report on this item at this period of the year, and therefore, comparisons with prior years are not available.

State	1959 (actual cases)
California.....	3,133,754
Other states.....	2,405,240
U. S. Total.....	5,538,994

Other states: Ark., Fla., Md., Miss., Mo., N. Y., Okla., Tenn., Texas, Va., Wash., and Wis.

The Division of Statistics also has issued a report on canners' stocks and shipments of spring-pack spinach. The Division plans to issue a report on spinach pack and stocks four times a year.

	1959-60 (actual cases)
Carryover, March 1.....	1,128,364
Pack (spring).....	5,538,994
Supply to Oct. 1.....	6,667,358
Stocks, Oct. 1.....	3,433,448
Shipments, March 1-Oct. 1.....	3,233,910

Stocks of Canned Peas

The first report of the current marketing year on canners' stocks and shipments of canned peas has been issued by the N.C.A. Division of Statistics.

	1958-59 (actual cases)	1959-60 (actual cases)
Carryover, June 1.....	8,495,074	9,649,751
Pack.....	33,110,010	29,020,062
Total supply.....	41,605,084	38,669,813
Stocks, Oct. 1.....	31,338,404	26,673,533
Shipments, June 1-Oct. 1.....	10,266,680	11,996,280

N.C.A. Committeemen Honored

C. L. Rumberger, Chairman of the N.C.A. Scientific Research Committee, has been honored by the American Management Association with its highest award, in recognition of his service to the A.M.A. as vice president of its Packaging Division. Mr. Rumberger is vice president, research and quality control, of the H. J. Heinz Company.

P. K. Shoemaker, a member of the N.C.A. Raw Products Committee and Chairman of the N.C.A. Canner-Grower Coordinating Committee, was elected vice president of the A.M.A. Manufacturing Division. He is vice president, manufacturing, of the H. J. Heinz Company.

Canned Foods Prominent in American Weekly Campaign

"Buffet Party Time," *American Weekly's* fall food promotion, is now under way in 5,000 participating supermarkets across the nation. Built around the three-page food editorial in the November 1 issue, the recipe promotion includes a number of canned foods. They are pineapple juice, deviled ham, tomato juice, black olives, cream of chicken soup, pimientos, tomatoes, bacon spread, chili con carne with beans, peas, cream of mushroom soup, and evaporated milk. The publication reaches 10 million homes each Sunday.

The 5,000 participating supermarkets are located in the 38 major cities where *American Weekly* is distributed. Each store will receive a promotion kit which includes two extra large window posters, two wire hangers, four blank banners to be filled in by grocers with related items, and nine banners featuring advertisers' products.

A unique feature of this promotion is the listing in the magazine of participating stores. Consumers will find these stores listed in a special column immediately following the editorial.

Dr. Mrak Inaugurated

Dr. Emil M. Mrak, prominent food technologist, was inaugurated October 23 as chancellor of the Davis campus of the University of California. He had headed the department of food technology there for 11 years, and much of his research has contributed importantly to canning.

One of the honored guests at Dr. Mrak's inauguration was Dr. Conrad A. Elvehjem, a biochemist who became president of the University of Wisconsin last year.

At a dinner honoring Dr. Mrak, the Canners League of California announced it has established two annual scholarships at the University of California at Davis. The scholarships are for the education and training of qualified candidates for a degree in the field of agriculture, including any phase of growing and processing.

USDA Plentiful Foods List

The USDA Plentiful Foods List for December includes cranberries, apples, raisins, sweet potatoes, onions, poultry, pork, almonds, filberts, lard, and vegetable oils and fats.

FDA Proposes To Ban Residues of Heptachlor

Notice is given in the *Federal Register* of October 27 that the FDA proposes to rescind its present regulation on the use of the pesticide heptachlor on certain food crops and to establish a zero tolerance for it.

Such action would ban any amount of residue of heptachlor in or on foods shipped in interstate commerce. The present regulation permits residues of one-tenth of one part per million on harvested fruit, vegetable, grain, and forage crops.

FDA stated that its proposal follows disclosure of new scientific data showing that an oxidation product of heptachlor—heptachlor epoxide—forms on crops, largely as a result of weathering. Residues of the epoxide on crops have heretofore gone undetected because the analytical method for detecting the product differs from that used to find heptachlor. Recent FDA studies have shown that such residues are likely to be present on crops even though farmers follow official recommendations for applying heptachlor.

Epoxide residues are also deposited in meat and milk when forage containing the epoxide residue is fed to meat and dairy animals, FDA stated.

According to available animal test data, FDA said, the epoxide appears to be more acutely toxic than heptachlor. Long-term testing and evaluation of results to prove the safety of combined residues of heptachlor and its epoxide have not been completed. The proposal to set a zero tolerance on heptachlor was taken, FDA said, as a preliminary step in eliminating any residue of heptachlor or the epoxide on crops for which heptachlor has been permitted.

Interested persons may file written views and comments with the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare within 30 days after publication of the FDA proposal.

Texas Canners Association

Joe Gavito, Jr., of Quality Products, Inc., La Feria, was reelected president of the Texas Canners Association at the group's annual meeting.

T. E. Stinson, Alamo Products Co., Alamo, was reelected vice president, and W. L. Akin, Southern Foods Co., McAllen was reelected treasurer. Jack H. Drake of Weslaco continues as acting executive secretary.

Forthcoming Meetings

- Nov. 3—Iowa-Nebraska Cannery Association, Annual Meeting, Tallcorn Hotel, Marshalltown
- Nov. 5—Illinois Cannery Association, Fall Meeting, LaSalle Hotel, Chicago
- Nov. 9-10—Wisconsin Cannery Association, 55th Annual Convention, Schroeder Hotel, Milwaukee
- Nov. 9-11—Grocery Manufacturers of America, Inc., Annual Meeting, Waldorf-Astoria, New York City
- Nov. 11—Pea Improvement Association, Hotel Schroeder, Milwaukee
- Nov. 13—Second National Conference on Snap Bean Improvement, Hotel Schroeder, Milwaukee
- Nov. 16-18—Georgia Cannery Association, Annual Convention, King & Prince Hotel, St. Simons Island
- Nov. 18-20—Indiana Cannery Association, Annual Convention, French Lick-Sheraton Hotel, French Lick
- Nov. 23-24—Michigan Cannery and Freezers Association, Fall Meeting, Pantlind Hotel, Grand Rapids
- Nov. 23-24—Pennsylvania Cannery Association, 45th Annual Convention, Yorktowne Hotel, York
- Nov. 30-Dec. 1—Ohio Cannery Association, 52d Annual Convention, Netherland Hilton Hotel, Cincinnati
- Dec. 3-4—New York State Cannery and Freezers Association, 74th Annual Convention, Statler-Hilton Hotel, Buffalo
- Dec. 6-10—National Junior Vegetable Growers Association, 25th Annual Convention, Hotel Roosevelt, Washington, D. C.
- Dec. 7-8—Tri-State Packers Association, Annual Convention, Haddon Hall, Atlantic City
- Dec. 7-8—Ontario Food Processors Association, 26th Annual Convention, Royal York Hotel, Toronto
- Dec. 7-10—Vegetable Growers Association of America, Annual Convention, Dennis and Shelburne Hotels, Atlantic City
- Dec. 12-16—National Food Sales Conference, National Food Brokers Association's 56th Annual Convention, Loop Hotels, Chicago
- Jan. 4-6, 1960—Northwest Cannery and Freezers Association, 4th Annual Convention, Olympic Hotel, Seattle
- Jan. 7-8—Cannery League of California, 37th Annual Fruit and Vegetable Sample Cuttings, Fairmont Hotel, San Francisco
- Jan. 10-13—Super Market Institute, Mid-year Conference, Hotel Americana, Miami Beach
- Jan. 17-19—National Preservers Association, Annual Convention, Deauville Hotel, Miami Beach
- Jan. 17-20—Canning Machinery and Supplies Association, Annual Meeting and Exhibit, Hotel Americana, Miami Beach
- Jan. 18-20—NATIONAL CANNERY ASSOCIATION, 53d Annual Convention, Hotel Americana, Miami Beach
- Jan. 25-27—National Institutional Wholesale Grocers Association, Annual Convention, Riviera Hotel, Las Vegas
- Feb. 9-11—Wisconsin Cannery Association, Raw Products Conference, Wisconsin Center Bldg., Madison
- Feb. 23-24—Canadian Food Processors Association, Annual Convention, Signior Club, Montebello, Que.
- Feb. 26-27—Virginia Cannery Association, 52d Annual Convention, Hotel John Marshall, Richmond
- March 3-4—Pennsylvania Cannery Association, Cannery Workshop, Allenberry Lodge, Boiling Springs
- March 6-10—National Association of Frozen Food Packers, 19th Annual Convention and Exposition, Conrad Hilton Hotel, Chicago
- March 14-15—Tri-State Packers Association, Spring Meeting, DuPont Hotel, Wilmington, Del.
- March 20-22—Cannery League of California, 56th Annual Meeting, Santa Barbara Biltmore, Santa Barbara
- March 22-23—Wisconsin Cannery Association, Spring Meeting, Wisconsin Center Bldg. and Loraine Hotel, Madison
- May 1-4—Super Market Institute, Inc., 23d Annual Convention, Atlantic City

O. B. Williams Memorial Fund

Colleagues of the late Dr. O. B. Williams at the University of Texas have announced plans for a memorial to Dr. Williams, who was head of the University's department of bacteriology. Dr. Williams was in charge of bacteriological work in the N.C.A. Washington Laboratory from 1935 to 1941 and made many acquaintances in the canning industry during that time. He died September 23.

The department of bacteriology at the University has established a committee to determine the most appropriate memorial, with a scholarship under consideration, depending on funds. The committee is inviting contributions, which should be addressed to the O. B. Williams Memorial Fund at the department of bacteriology, University of Texas, Austin 12, Texas.

Shipping Red Sour Cherries

Experience with the new method of shipping freshly harvested red sour cherries to processors—in tanks of water instead of lugs—has shown the importance of keeping the water cold to prevent surface discoloration (scald), according to the USDA.

Scientists of the USDA's Agricultural Research Service found that the treatment cherries receive after harvesting may affect the rate at which they take in oxygen and give off carbon dioxide. Bruised cherries "breathe" more rapidly than sound fruit, but cold water, by reducing respiratory activity, keeps scald to a minimum.

Water at 55 to 60 degrees F. minimizes this damage. If water at this temperature is not available, or if the holding time exceeds 1 or 2 hours, ice should be added.

In the past season some 70 million pounds of cherries were hauled to processors, either directly from the orchard or from nearby receiving stations, in large tanks of water. Bulk hauling of cherries in water has been adopted by many growers as a result of earlier USDA-Michigan State University engineering research. This method of transporting cherries also fits in well with mechanical tree-shaking, a new labor-saving means of harvesting cherries.

Equipment for shaking cherries off trees onto canvas was tried experimentally last year in cooperative research in Michigan. Cherries harvested by this method and hauled in cold water arrived at processing plants in better condition than cherries picked by hand and transported in lugs without cooking.

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